

FOCUS



HANDS &
VOICES™
MINNESOTA

Supporting families with children
who are deaf & hard of hearing

Introduction to the IEP: Individualized Education Plan

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is the document that outlines the special education and related services that your school district will provide for your child at no cost to you. IEP services will be based on information gathered from evaluations, state and district assessments, current levels of achievement on IEP goals and in the general education curriculum. The IEP provides a written record of decisions made at IEP meetings.

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), “the term individualized education program or IEP means a written statement for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with federal and state laws, regulations, and rules. 34 CFR 300.320”

The IEP document is the cornerstone of the special education process and the key to services your child receives. By understanding your child’s IEP and taking an active role in developing it, you can ensure that your child receives the education and services needed.

The purpose of special education is “to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them free appropriate public education (FAPE) that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living.” IDEA 601 (d)(1)

Each school is responsible for organizing and conducting IEP meetings. An IEP meeting must be held at least once a year.

After the IEP meeting, you will receive a Prior Written Notice and a Parental Consent/Objection Form with the IEP. This is your opportunity to agree or disagree with the planned services for your child.

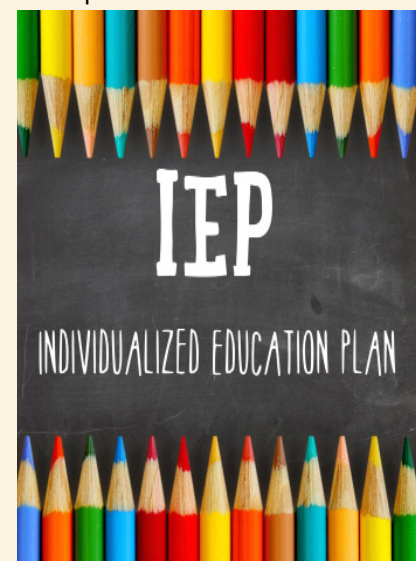
Your child’s IEP team must include:

- A parent or the student if age 18 or older
- A school district representative who is qualified to teach or supervise special education
- At least one of your child’s special education teachers

who will be responsible for implementing the IEP (usually the case manager.)

- At least one of your child’s regular education teachers
- A person who is qualified to interpret evaluation results

Attendance at IEP meetings is required for all the professionals listed above with two exceptions. A team member may be excused from attendance for whole or part of an IEP meeting if area of curriculum or related services is or is not being modified or discussed, and the parent and school district agree in writing that the member need not attend the meeting. The school must ensure that the team includes all the required members.

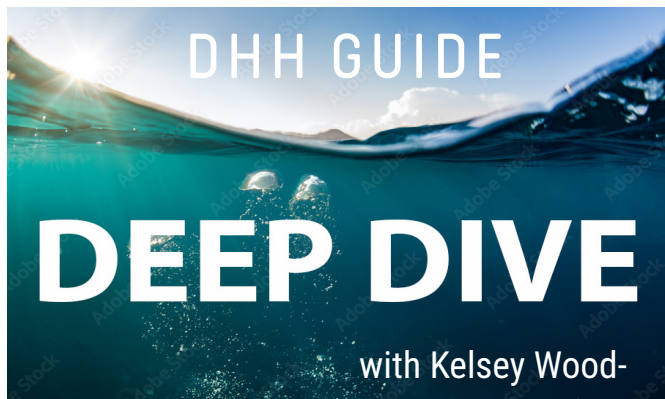


When you are notified of the IEP meeting, you must be informed of the meeting date, time, and location. Some IEP meeting notice forms note how much time the school has allowed for this meeting. If your form does not include this information, you may want to ask before the meeting begins so that you can plan your time accordingly. The team may need to add time or reconvene to cover all the issues and IEP components.

Before the IEP meeting, parents may ask the IEP case manager to add their issues to the meeting agenda.

This article is taken in part from the PACER.org website. The Minnesota Parent Training and Information Center (PACER), funded by the U.S Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs.





Deaf and Hard of Hearing Guide Program

The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Guide program focuses exclusively on the needs of families and their children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHH). We are a diverse group of DHH adults with a wide range of experiences related to our individual hearing levels. We use different modes of communication and may or may not use technology.

Families and students can meet positive role models who share their own experiences growing up. DHH Guides act as unbiased resources and help the family/student identify practical solutions for navigating some of the common challenges that children may experience. Our interactions can range from addressing concerns parents may have to having a pleasant conversation with a child about anything they wish to share such as technology, accommodations, accessibility, or what has worked for us.

We are always connecting with families making sure they know what resources are available to them and hoping each DHH child can have a role model to look up to. So please feel free to reach out to us or connect with us through your parent guide.

When I attended an IEP Meeting at school, it was usually surrounded by my parents, my IEP case worker, principal, sometimes counselor, and/or the school transition coordinator. I attended Deaf School and was going to a mainstream school at same time. While attending the Deaf School the transition coordinator helped with scheduling classes and hiring an interpreter for myself and others that needed it.

My parents were usually on the phone to discuss my goals in school like speech therapy, reading goals, any struggles that felt to be addressed to add or remove the goals on the IEP plan.

When I was in my hometown public school, before I transferred to Deaf School, one of my requirements was to have a Deaf/Hard of Hearing teacher. They would follow up daily to make sure I was doing well and understanding the classwork tasks, working on my speech, reading, and whatever I was struggling with. This also including making sure I sit in the front of the class to see the interpreter along with the teacher while the teacher is writing on the board and talking about the subject of the day.



Kelsey has been profoundly Deaf in both ears since nine months old Her family learned to sign Exact English (SEE). She wore hearing aides, around two years old and then later Cochlear Implants (CI). Both were unsuccessful. Kelsey learned American Sign Language at the Deaf school in Faribault in seventh grade.

Our services are free to all Minnesota families with children who are DHH. We meet with families in the home or their preferred location. We visit students at the schools, meet with them, and give self-advocacy presentations relating to their own experience at the request of teachers and parents. We also connect with families at MN Hands & Voices Events.

All DHH Guides receive bi-annual trainings to continue learning and improving services and support for families

Contact: Heidy Nazario DHH Guide Supervisor
Phone: 612. 297.6603 (TEXT ONLY)
Email: heidy.nazario@lssmn.org

MNH&V EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

**MNHV Parent Guide for the Northeast
African Communities**

The MNHV NE African Communities Parent Guide position offers 10 flexible hours a week, some evenings and weekends, and a family-friendly work environment. MNHV Parent Guides receive specific training and team support. Parent Guides are responsible for the initial and follow-up connections critical to families who have a newly identified child who is DHH. They work closely with the MNHV team and learn the best way to support our families. They organize and lead family events, represent MNHV in the

“What works for your child is what makes the choice right.”

Greetings from across Minnesota! In September I became the director of MN Hands and Voices, 33 years into my journey of parenting a child who is DHH. In my case, my son is Deaf. He was born in a time when early intervention was still new, the first commercial cell phone was 5 years old, world wide internet launched the year he was born, and captions on TV (let alone anywhere else) were a novelty. Cochlear implants were not being put onto babies or really young children, Cued Speech was barely 20 years old and Hands & Voices had not yet come into existence. Those first few years were difficult. Information came from very few sources and we felt very alone. When we did gather information, there was nobody around with similar experiences that we could compare notes with, or share our innermost concerns with reflected empathy.

IN YOUR CORNER

with Anne Barlow

“LOVE AND LANGUAGE

are the greatest gifts a parent can give any child; with nurturing love and unrestricted access to language from an early age, a child’s potential is limitless.”

- Nyle DiMarco Foundation



So much has changed and improved in so many ways, and having Hands & Voices here to support families is one of the most significant. Hands & Voices celebrated 25 years of parent-to-parent support last year and are on the leading edge of sharing information that helps parents make informed decisions regarding the many facets of raising a child who is DHH. Like the saying goes, “We’ve come a long way, baby!” We can share information on better technology (both hearing and assistive), more and better ways to connect with each other, stronger case law to help parents advocate for free and appropriate public education (FAPE), and a better scientific understanding of how infants and children acquire language.





Parenting any child is a challenge; parenting a child through unfamiliar territory can be daunting, but we are here to walk with you on this journey. Had MHHV existed when our son was born, we would have walked a more confident path and would have had more information on which to base our decisions. Nothing compares to connecting with others who share lived experience. I am honored to be able to work with a compassionate and knowledgeable team who are here to give you the kind of support that would have been so nurturing to me at the beginning. Whether you want just the occasional check in, or more consistent connection, we will meet you where you are, and help you to realize the potential in your child.

- Anne Barlow, Director of MNHV

community, and participate in family support activities. Your personal experience of the challenges and joys of parenting a child who is dhh, helps support other parents who are just starting their journey. Candidate for this position must be fluent in Somali. To find out more or to apply and send a resume, please contact

Elena Miranda
Lead Cultural Parent Guide
elena.miranda@lssmn.org
651.265.2383

..... CONTACT

-  651.265.2435
-  mnhv@lssmn.org
-  mnhandandvoices.org
-  @MNHandsandVoices
-  @mnhandsandvoices

MNH&V TRANSITION TALK with Abie Curran

MNHV asked Abie, age 20, and her mother Deanne a series of questions about Abie's experience transitioning to adulthood. Abie is DeafBlind and uses voice, auditory input through unilateral Cochlear Implant (CI), American Sign Language (ASL) and Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) or captioning to fill in what is missed. She also knows Braille and uses tactile cues regarding information in her environment. Abie's unique abilities and strengths make her who she is.

Abie lives in the Southeast Metro with her parents. She enjoys virtual cooking classes, going to movies, trying new restaurants, bowling and swimming with friends and family. She makes spa products, that she may sell through her brother's Etsy business in the future. Abie has worked for about three years for a small catering business, which she really enjoys. She has also volunteered in the past at the Dakota County Fair.

Her parents state that they are most proud of her perseverance and kindness toward others. Abie has patiently learned to adapt to a lot of changes. She hopes someday to have a form of independent transportation, such as a driverless car, so she can go where she wants anytime she wants to go. Some short term

goals for Abie are to finish classes through District 287 VECTOR DHH program. In June 2022, do some traveling, possibly to Washington, DC. Abie notes that her classes and her teachers at VECTOR are wonderful in paying attention to what she needs and wants.



MNHV asked Abie how she feels about the term "disabled" and she said, "our family does not use the words disability to separate and identify people; we also do not stress the word independence. We know that everyone is unique and relies on others and I know who to get assistance from, if I need it."

Abie's advice to parents raising kids with a hearing difference is to keep looking for opportunities and options. We want to be respected and our opinions considered like any other young adult.

Her advice for those in the education system is to help them use strengths and focus less on what they can't do or explain all the skills they need to learn. Having additional support people at school, sometimes students are not allowed to just be themselves without working on a skill. We all would like as many natural friendships and relationships as possible.



Visit Deaf Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS) for more information at: <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ecn/programs/911/Documents/text-911-fact-sheet.pdf>

ABOUT TEXT-TO-911

- Text-to-911 has been available throughout Minnesota since December 2017.
- Text-to-911 can be the first contact option for individuals who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing or those with speech impairments.
- Text-to-911 should only be used when a person can't safely make a voice call.

Examples:

- When someone must stay quiet to remain safe.
- If peer pressure is strong.
- Text-to-911 is a discreet way to report domestic violence, home invasions, human trafficking, and suicidal individuals.

HOW TO TEXT 911

1. Enter the numbers 911 in the "To" field.
2. Text your exact location and type of emergency.
3. Send the message.
4. Promptly answer questions and follow instructions.

“Lo que funciona para su hijo es lo que hace que la elección sea correcta”

IEP - Programa Individual de Educación

El IEP es un Programa Individual de Educación diseñado específicamente para que cada niño con necesidades diferentes alcance su máximo potencial educativo y social.

En Manos y Voces de Minnesota contamos con un programa gratuito para los padres interesados en aprender cuales son los derechos de nuestros niños hablando en el sentido educativo. Este programa se llama ASTra Advocacy.

Con este programa usted puede aprender como abogar por derechos de sus niños y los de usted, como solicitar los servicios a los que su niño tiene derecho, como pedir que cambien las cosas que no están funcionando en la escuela para su niño, quienes son las personas que deben de estar en el equipo del IEP, quien tiene la última palabra en el IEP, como involucrar a su niño en las sesiones del IEP. Estas y muchas más preguntas son respondidas durante las sesiones de ASTra.

Les comparto mi propia experiencia y lo agradecida que estoy de tener conocimiento en ASTra.

“Mi hijo tiene sordera bilateral profunda, tiene 16 años, se comunica principalmente con ASL. La escuela a la que mi hijo asistía es muy buena, su IEP estaba funcionando muy bien para él, tenía todos los servicios apropiados; pero yo sabía que dentro del IEP no solo se deben de considerar los objetivos académicos, sino también el aspecto social. Y basado en ello convoqué a una reunión del IEP y solicite cambiaran a mi hijo a una escuela que esta a 43 millas de distancia, en esta escuela mi hijo tendría la oportunidad de aprender habilidades para una vida independiente, pues el tendría

que quedarse en los dormitorios de la escuela.

El distrito escolar me aseguró que no había necesidad de hacer el cambio, pues académicamente mi hijo estaba alcanzando sus objetivos. Así que hice uso de lo aprendido en ASTra y después de dos reuniones y explicar mis motivos para el cambio, no pudieron negarse a mi solicitud. Este cambio era una prueba de 6 meses, si la escuela no era apropiada para mi hijo él tendría que volver.

Hasta el día de hoy mi hijo sigue en esa escuela en donde ha aprendido no solo los aspectos académicos, sino también ha adquirido muchas habilidades para su vida adulta e independiente. El distrito escolar sigue siendo responsable por cubrir los costos de la educación de mi hijo incluyendo la transportación”

No importa nuestro estatus migratorio, no importa la nacionalidad de nuestros niños. No dude en contactarnos si tiene cualquier duda o pregunta.

Elena Miranda Elena.Miranda@lssmn.org
651.265.2383

LATINO CULTURES

with Elena Miranda

Meet Yia Yang, Minnesota Hands & Voices South East Asian Parent Guide. Yia is Hmong-American. He was born in a refugee camp in Thailand and came to the United States when he was 2 years old.

Yia graduated from the University of Minnesota Duluth with a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science. Previously he worked as a community organizer and as a program coordinator at a university multicultural center.

Yia has a young daughter with bilateral profound sensorineural hearing loss. His daughter has bilateral cochlear implants. She was activated at 15 months old. He and his partner both encourage their daughter to learn spoken language and ASL.

With no family history of a hearing difference, the news of Yia's daughter's hearing difference was a shock to the family. MNHV was there at the beginning of their hearing journey providing support, care, and guidance throughout. Yia is thankful for MNHV and in this role as a South East Asian Parent Guide Yia hopes to provide the same support, care and guidance to other South East Asian families with children with hearing difference.. Yia speaks both English and Hmong.

In his free time Yia enjoys bass fishing, watching sports and spending time with his partner, daughter, and dog.

Contact Yia Yang at yia.yang@lssmn.org



DEAF EXPERIENCE

with Josh Curran

I am DeafBlind and autistic. I have Usher's Syndrome type 1 which includes Retinitis Pigmentosa and Deafness. I was born deaf hard of hearing then at the age of nine years old I started to lose my vision. I currently have pinhole vision with 10 degrees or less which means I have tunnel vision.

For accommodations I use a cane for traveling around so I don't bump into anything and so I can avoid injuries to others or myself. If I forget my cane at home, I can cause a serious injury from something like tripping and falling. I get hurt really bad and could get a cut or scratch, bloody nose, or a broken bone. I like large print when I read and use ASL interpreters and Support Service Providers (SSP). When communicating with people that don't sign, I can use paper and pen or phone text. There are different flashing lights I have for my doorbell. I also have a fire alarm in my apartment, and signals for weather warnings.

I have been self employed for three years now. My business is called J.C. Office Support. I also work on Etsy and have a Facebook Page. I make custom address labels and send them to different customers via mail. The address labels have a few size options and I offer different holiday designs such as Christmas, Thanksgiving, Saint Patrick's Day and Valentine's Day. I also offer the four different seasons along with various other options.

Soon I will have my second Braille game available for purchase. Other products that I have offered include lip balm, candle boxes, candle holders, bath salts, solar jar lights, music notes and I-Love-You (ILY) hand shape sign ornaments, ILY napkin holders, I may have different options for a Spring Sale.

I am interested in collaborating with other Deaf, hard of hearing or Deafblind small business owners or artists who are interested in selling handmade items.



My business email is j.c.osmn@gmail.com
<https://www.facebook.com/JC-Office-Support-108311513938355/>

Welcome to MN Hands & Voices



Jeanette Shaw
Metro Parent Guide

Contact Jeanette at
jeanette.shaw@lssmn.org
651.265.2435

Jeanette Shaw lives in Woodbury MN with her four children. She has a 13-year-old son who is hearing. She also has 9-year-old twins; a boy and girl, her son has a mild hearing difference. The newest addition to their family is now 6 months old. She is hearing, she runs the household and demands all of their attention.

Jeanettes home has recently faced a lot of changes, and she and her family are still working to get through it all. "We have had some real difficult times, but all in all MNHV has been good for my family. I am thankful to be working for this organization," Jeanette said.



Thomas Hoolihan
Metro Parent Guide

Contact Thomas at
thomas.hoolihan@lssmn.org
651.358.5278

Thomas Hoolihan lives in Stillwater MN with his wife Daniela. Parents of a 10-year-old boy, Teo who was born with Ushers Syndrome and received his Bilateral Cochlear implant at 13 months old. Teo is now experiencing sight issues due to the DeafBlind diagnoses.

Thomas has enjoyed volunteering and working on special events with Northern Voices in MN and the Atlanta Speech School for children with deaf and hard of hearing needs.

Thomas has learned even more about the special needs for hearing and eyesight differences with his son and wants to continue his journey guiding other families to helpful options through MNHV.



HANDS & VOICES™ MINNESOTA

MNHV EVENTS

STATEWIDE

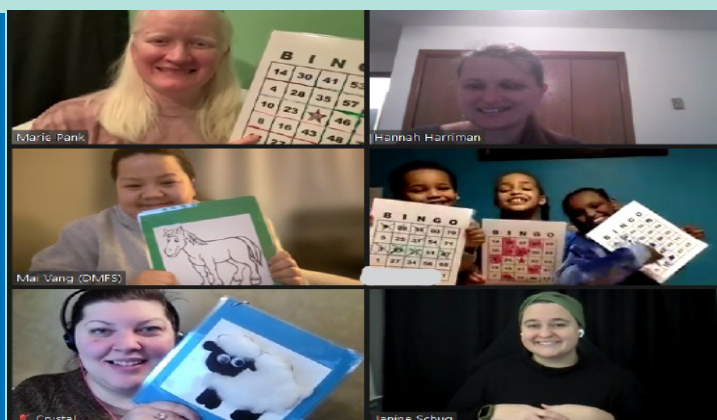
..... Snowman



..... Fostering Joy



.. Accessible Games ..



..... Book Club



Roller Skating at Skateville in Burnsville

..... EVENTS

- IN-PERSON
 - Metro Roller Skating
- ON-LINE
 - Build your own Snowman
 - Accessible Games & Entertainment
 - Fostering Joy
 - Book Club
 - Book: Nobody Knows

Find a current list of MNHV Family Events online, for more information and registration visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/minnesota-hands-amp-voices-at-iss-9882223703>



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709 University Ave. W.
St. Paul, MN 55104

FOCUS
NEWSLETTER

FOCUS | Supporting families with children who are deaf & hard of hearing

April 2022

HANDS & VOICES
LEAGUE OF HEROES
SUPERPOWERS WITHIN™

*Calling all the Superheroes in the MNH&V Community!
Dust off your superhero costume or come as you are to join our Hands & Voices' League of Heroes!*

HANDS & VOICES™
MINNESOTA

IN PERSON FAMILY EVENT

FREE FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

2022 Annual • Minnesota Hands & Voices • Metro

DATE: Thursday, August 4th

TIME: 5:00-8:30pm (rain or Shine)

WHERE: Como Park Midway Pavilion 1199 Midway Parkway, Saint Paul, MN

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2022-mn-hands-voices-annual-metro-picnic-tickets-275272376087>